

Unfair to CIA By William S. White

Delay Verdict Till Evidence Is In

THIS COUNTRY'S many articulate victims of the great ultraliberal syndrome of our time—that is, a quivering fever of conviction that this Government is inevitably wrong in any conceivable attempt to set off any really tough backfire to the fires of Communist subversion — have again automatically convicted the poor old Central Intelligence Agency.



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CIA's crime this time is the disclosure, first made by a violently left-wing and bitterly anti-Vietnam war little magazine called Ramparts, that for some 14 years the Agency has been giving financial assistance to anti-Communist or non-Communist student groups who seek to resist the incomparably more heavily financed Communist program to indoctrinate the universities everywhere and to dominate any and all student conferences on Cold War issues.

Not all of the facts are yet at hand, but the liberal-syndrome verdict of guilty as charged is, of course, already in before the jury has even entered the box. The jury is a group of three officials headed by Under Secretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach which has been charged by the President to look into this business—into all the facts, and not simply into such facts or alleged facts as the lefties have seen fit to produce.

The President's instructions are for a review of any governmental activity that might endanger the independence of the educational community. But the President's instructions do not stop there. For he recalls as well "the great need of American private organizations to participate in the world community." "Other countries," he says, "provide substantial substance for such activity."

WHAT THIS MEANS is that for decades the Communists have provided a "substantial subsidy" to every kind of world student convocation so that they could pack these supposedly open discussions with their own people. On the evidence now available, what CIA has mainly been doing is providing the means to non-Communist students to attend these student conferences and offer a point of view different from that of the Communists.

If this turns out to be the truth of the business, and if it turns out that CIA has not mortally corrupted American youth by helping it to participate in student convocations that would otherwise have been totally controlled by Communist stooges, it will be difficult for some people to believe that a capital offense has been committed here.

For the long-observable truth is that Communist money for the indoctrination of students both here and abroad has been most lavishly expended. Any rational man can see as much when he looks at some of the so-called "student demonstrations" which have been occurring on some American campuses under the undoubted leadership of pro-Chinese Communist forces.

BUT IF WE want to look at the whole matter of "subsidy" with any honesty we also want to look well beyond what the CIA alone has done. Some of the largest and most prestige-laden of American foundations have for years undeniably offered much shelter to writers and others whose opposition to any strong stand anywhere to Communist expansionism is perfectly clear on the record.

Now, in this columnist's opinion, this is no crime; for there is nothing in the law or in American tradition to forbid multibillion-dollar foundations to give the better of it to the left if they so choose. But it is a little silly to suppose that this form of Foundation money is absolutely chaste or even

absolutely private. The simple fact is that it, too, is very near to being public money—that is to say Government money—for had it not all been poured into precisely these foundations a very great part of it would have been quite rightfully seized by Government tax collectors.

The central point of this piece, however, is simply this: There is a spreading American characteristic of self-indictment, alike of the Government under any President and of our national motives at any time, that amounts to a national neurosis.

So let us not for a moment exculpate the CIA; but let us on the other hand be willing to wait for all the evidence before consigning it to the outer darkness.

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